

RON THORNBURGH
Secretary of State



First Floor, Memorial Hall
120 SW 10th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66612-1594
(785) 296-4564

STATE OF KANSAS

For more information contact:

Jesse Borjon, Public Relations Director
Office of the Secretary of State
First Floor, Memorial Hall
120 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1594
785/249-2418
785/296-4580
jesseb@kssos.org

Media Release

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THORNBURGH PLEASED WITH PROGRESS ON FEDERAL ELECTION REFORM

Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh today announced he is pleased with the passage of the Ney-Hoyer election reform bill (H.R. 3295). The United States House of Representatives passed the bill Wednesday afternoon with 362 members voting in favor and 63 members voting against the bill. "As president of the National Association of Secretaries of State, I have been privileged to be at the forefront of negotiations for a bipartisan, and effective federal election reform bill," stated Thornburgh. "After working on this issue for the past year, it is rewarding to see the House craft an appropriate and measured response to the 2000 Presidential election. While states continue as the administrators of America's elections, with the Ney-Hoyer legislation the federal government has stepped forward to provide direction and funding."

Congressmen Bob Ney (R-OH) and Steny Hoyer (D-MD), the top Republican and Democrat on the committee with jurisdiction over federal election reform authored the legislation. The bipartisan legislation is a mix of federal assistance to states and basic election standards. In order for states to receive federal assistance, the bill requires states to adopt a statewide voter registration system linked to local jurisdictions, in-precinct provisional voting, a system for maintaining accuracy of voter registration records, and assurances that voters will be able to correct voting errors.

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The bill authorizes \$2.65 billion for federal election reform, includes \$400 million to replace punch-card voting systems. Kansas does not authorize the use of punch card voting systems. The remaining \$2.25 billion will be available to help states maintain accurate lists of eligible voters, improve equipment, recruit and train poll workers, improve access for disable voters, and educate voters about their rights.

“I am pleased the House has put its stamp of approval on this landmark piece of reform legislation with the help of the entire Kansas delegation,” stated Thornburgh. “The ‘Help America Vote Act’ will improve our electoral process without imposing overly restrictive guidelines upon the states. I look forward to the passage of similar bipartisan legislation in the Senate.”

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Ron Thornburgh is the 29th Kansas Secretary of State. Ron currently serves as President of the National Association of Secretaries of State Ron is a native of Burlingame. He graduated from Washburn University in 1985. Ron, his wife Annette and sons Grey and Tanner live in Topeka.